



Pinnacle

1310 W. Ridge Rd.
P.O. Box 1720
Gainesville, GA. 30503
(770) 538-2626
www.gmrc.ga.gov
Editor: Marissa Smith

Georgia Mountains Regional Commission

Executive Director's Report



- ♦ Best wishes to our friends in **Clarkesville** and **Dahlonega**. Both communities had downtown fires that destroyed or heavily damaged one or more buildings in their downtown business districts. Best wishes and thanks to all who have assisted and offered to assist in funding the rebuilding of their beautiful communities' hearts. There are many stories, but one that really touches me is that in **Clarkesville**, two churches are serving covered dish meals and selling plates to guests and church members with proceeds going to those who have been burned out. That is what we do in small mountain communities.
- ♦ Thank you to Department of Community Affairs (DCA) Commissioner Gretchen Corbin, Saralyn Stafford, Brian Williamson and the entire DCA staff for their very quick response in these situations. When Gretchen says it will be a quick response, she really means it. Her staff backs it up with their quick response also. Great folks with which to serve. I am also very proud of our Georgia Mountains Regional Commission (GMRC) team and their response to this situation. All of the Department Heads have made sure that we respond in a crisis situation.
- ♦ Thanks to Bruce Georgia (**Dahlonega** City Manager) and Stan Kelley (**Lumpkin** County Manager) for hosting our winter manager's meeting and luncheon. This was one of the best attended and best participated meetings. The City and County Managers are able to join for a full day of meeting and lunch (provided by the participants). **White County's** Manager, Mike Melton, will be hosting our Spring meeting in May. Bruce is the new manager in **Dahlonega** and met many new friends at this meeting. Looks like **Dahlonega** was able to find an outstanding City Manager.
- ♦ Please, if you have a chance to eat or shop in **Clarkesville** or **Dahlonega**, do so. Our personal money can surely help during the down turn in their economy in their respective communities.

Employee Spotlight



GMRC would like to welcome our newest staff member, Caleb Davidson. Caleb is a Regional Planner in our Planning Department. He is 30 years old and is a native of **Hall County** and currently lives in **Lula**. He is an East Hall High School graduate and attended Clemson University where he obtained a Bachelor's degree in Landscape Architecture in 2006. He has experience with hand and computer graphics, land planning, and a variety of residential/commercial projects. Caleb played baseball in high school and was a pitcher for the Clemson Tigers. In his spare time, he enjoys playing/singing worship music on the acoustic guitar, as well as any other genre of music. He enjoys spending time with his family and especially hanging out with his niece, Kennadie, and nephew Cayde. Caleb is the oldest of three children and has a younger sister Cheslie and brother Cody. We are excited and honored to have Caleb as part of the GMRC family. Welcome aboard!

UPCOMING MEETINGS

DATE	TIME	EVENT	LOCATION
March 27	3:30 pm	WD Board Meeting	Hall County Gov't Office Building
	5:00 pm	GMRC Executive Committee	Hall County Gov't Office Building
	5:30 pm	Chief Local Elected Officials Meeting	Hall County Gov't Office Building
	6:00 pm	GMRC Council Meeting	Hall County Gov't Office Building
April 1	————	Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) Due	Contact Heather Feldman for information 770-538-2610
April 10	9am-2pm	Digital Economy Plan Stakeholders Meeting	GMRC Training Room
April 17	9am-2pm	Digital Economy Plan Stakeholders Meeting	GMRC Training Room
April 24	6:00 pm	GMRC Council Meeting	Sponsored by Towns County

For more information on these events contact Marissa Smith at 770-538-2626 or msmith@gmrc.ga.gov

Governor's Office of Highway Safety Caravan

The Governor's Office of Highway Safety is planning a caravan to **Forsyth County** May 7-10. The state agency will be focusing on promoting and implementing road safety measures across the county. The effort's main focus is occupant protection, but will also address many highway safety issues. Since 2009, **Forsyth County** has seen an increase in the number of vehicle-related fatalities. The overall goal for this four-day event is to curb the number of crashes, injuries, and fatalities on **Forsyth County** roads, and to ensure that all citizens are given the necessary education for safe driving.

"The uptick in vehicle-related fatalities in this county is something we're very concerned about," GOHS Director Harris Blackwood said. "We want to share our resources and knowledge with the residents of **Forsyth County** to put a stop to this trend and keep motorists and those around our roadways safe."

The Making a Safer **Forsyth** campaign will send technicians and officials to elementary, middle and high schools in the county, educating students on the many areas of highway safety.

CarFit events will be scheduled to help educate older drivers in the county. Certified technicians will help them enhance their safety and feel comfortable behind the wheel. Car seat technicians will also be on hand throughout the week to offer courses in English and Spanish on proper child safety seat restraints.

Bike and pedestrian safety will also take priority throughout the week. A child safety seat check-up is scheduled on the last day of the caravan and is open to anyone who wishes to check the safety of their car seat.

Below is a list of scheduled events for the Making a Safer **Forsyth** highway safety caravan:

- **Tuesday, May 6 6:00-8:00pm**
Chick-fil-A Lanier Crossing Family Night
Handing out brochures and seat check information
- **Wednesday, May 7 8:00-12:00pm and 1:00-5:00pm**
Law Enforcement CPS Education Classes, closed to public
- **Wednesday, May 7 11:00-12:00pm**
Opening Ceremony Press Conference
Lanier Tech Forsyth Campus
- **Wednesday, May 7 10:00-12:00pm**
CarFit Event, Older Driver Safety
Central Park Senior Rec Center
- **Wednesday, May 7 6:00-8:00pm**
ESOL/Literacy Class
Information to Hispanic families - caravan and seat check
Cumming United Methodist Church
- **Thursday, May 8 9:00-11:00am**
Whitlow Elementary School
CPS education
- **Thursday, May 8 12:30-3:30pm**
Lakeside Middle School,
Seatbelt safety and pre-driving safety
- **Friday, May 9 10:00-12:00pm**
CarFit Event, Older Driver Safety
Sexton Hall Enrichment Center
- **Friday, May 9 10:00-12:00pm**
South Forsyth High School
Distracted Driving, Driving Under the Influence, Seatbelt Safety
- **Saturday, May 10 12:00 – 3:00pm**
Location TBD



Economic Development

- ♦ GMRC Economic Development Staff submitted seven Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) grants on behalf of the following communities and projects:
 - Franklin County** – Road Improvements
 - City of Gainesville** – Central Core Area Strategic Plan
 - Gainesville and Hall County Development Authority** – Road Improvements
 - City of Lavonia** – Sewer and Road Improvements
 - Lumpkin County** – Water Improvements
 - Union County BOE** – Practical Assessment & Exploration Systems Lab
 - City of Young Harris** – Sewer Improvements
- ♦ GMRC ED Staff submitted two Economic Development Administration (EDA) grants on behalf of the following communities and projects:
 - Food Bank of Northeast Georgia (**Rabun County**) – The Whole Community Food Hub – Commercial Kitchen and Cannery
 - City of Lavonia** – Sewer and Road Improvements
- ♦ A Watson-Brown Foundation Grant was submitted for the **City of Lavonia** for building stabilization and renovations to the Historic Cannery Building.



- ♦ On behalf of the **City of Oakwood**, a Community Development Block Grant – Employment Incentive Program grant was submitted for road improvements to M. Stringer Road to facilitate the expansion of King's Hawaiian.
- ♦ On behalf of the **Gainesville and Hall County Development Authority**, an application for \$800,000 was submitted to the OneGeorgia Authority for the purchase of machinery and equipment to facilitate the expansion of King's Hawaiian.



Information Services

- ♦ The Request for Proposal has been released for the 2015 Aerial Photography/LiDAR Project. It is available on our website: www.gmrc.ga.gov
- ♦ Through a state-wide effort to assess broadband access and availability, GMRC has been tasked with creating a regional Digital Economic Plan. The staff will be conducting two Stakeholders Meetings whereby we will be reaching out to you for your input on broadband needs and trends as it relates to your field of expertise. The meeting dates are April 10th and April 17th and will be held at GMRC in our Training Room. Please RSVP by April 4th to Faith Bryan at fbryan@gmrc.ga.gov.
- ♦ The **City of Lula** has requested assistance with road mileage maintained by the City in **Banks** and **Hall Counties** for a Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) program.
- ♦ GMRC staff met with the **City of Toccoa** regarding the City owned and operated 26 acre Cemetery. The City expressed an interest in converting the existing paper maps and customer log book into a digital format. A quotation has been sent to the City for review.
- ♦ **Lula, Maysville and Gillsville** Zoning data has been submitted to **Banks County** GIS to be incorporated within the County's Zoning files.
- ♦ GMRC staff met with the **Town of Clermont** to discuss the creation of four Voting Districts/Wards using the 2010 US Census Bureau Redistricting Data.

Upcoming CarFit Events:

3/27/2014

Dawson County Senior Center
10:00 am

4/15/2014

Rabun County Senior Center
10:00 am

4/22/2014

City of Hartwell Fire Station
10:00 am

4/29/2014

Lumpkin County Senior Center
10:00 am

5/7/2014

Central Park—Forsyth County
10:00 am

5/9/2014

Sexton Hall Senior Center—City of Cumming
10:00 am

Planning Services

- ◆ Please help us welcome Caleb Davidson as the newest member of the Planning Department. A native of **Hall County** who graduated from Clemson University, Caleb will serve as a regional planner.
- ◆ The **Dawson County** Short-Term Work Program (STWP) update has been approved by the Department of Community Affairs (DCA).
- ◆ The Hazard Mitigation Plans for **Franklin County** and **Stephens County** have been approved by the Federal Emergency Management Authority (EMA).
- ◆ GMRC staff are assisting the **City of Clarkesville** with the application for a new Opportunity Zone designation for their downtown.
- ◆ GMRC staff have begun surveying permit holders for water supply intakes and discharge points within the Chattahoochee River watershed. This is part of our work in implementing the State's various Watershed Management Plans.
- ◆ **Habersham County** has received to date more than 300 comments as part of their Highway 365 Corridor Study.



Finance

- ◆ The GMRC RLF is closing its 14th loan this week for a business in **Lumpkin County**. We are currently reviewing one loan for a recommendation to the committee and awaiting two applications. We appreciate everyone on the loan committee taking the time to attend conference calls and loan meetings.
- ◆ The Finance Department is busy preparing for the upcoming FY14 audits and working on the preliminary budget for FY15.

Workforce Development

- ◆ The Youth Department met with 160 youth throughout the 13 county region, during the months of January and February, in preparation for the Summer Youth Program
- ◆ The Youth Department participated in the Hall County Transition Career Expo and met with approximately 320 youth
- ◆ Youth staff participated in teaching on interviewing skills workshops in **Banks** and **Hart Counties**, which involved approximately 125 youth.
- ◆ Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funded, Chestatee High School Tutoring Program re-established with five eligible youth
- ◆ Credit Recovery Assistance program established at **Stephens County** Mountain Education Center
- ◆ Process begins for establishing Credit Recovery Assistance at **Rabun County** Mountain Education Center
- ◆ Youth Department Staff met with approximately 100 youth in the Regional Youth Detention Center during the month of February.
- ◆ The large Mobile Training Unit (MTU) was made available for immediate Unemployment Filing and to hand out WIA information on March 12th at **Clarkesville** City Hall for the dislocated workers affected by the fire on the Square. On March 19th the MTU returned, in order to assist with resume writing for those same affected dislocated workers.
- ◆ The large MTU was made available for immediate Unemployment Filing on March 18th for the dislocated workers affected by the fire that destroyed Shenanigan's Irish Pub in **Dahlonega**. There were 30 individuals affected.
- ◆ Below are the current number of responses our MTU's have had for the month of March. These totals are from March 1st—March 14th.

Total Job Searches	60
Total Job App	23
Total Resumes	15
Total Interviews	2
Total Interest Survey	1
Total Training Sessions	10
Total Testing	0
Total Typing Assessments	0
Total GMRC Info	49
Total Unemployment Claims	3
Computer Trainings	0
Microsoft Office Classes	0
GED assistance	5
Total Responses	162